



Miami prison receives perfect score

By **MIKE FLETCHER**

Tribune staff writer

— BUNKER HILL — The Miami Correctional Facility received high praise from members of a nationally accredited committee that toured the prison north of Kokomo this week.

J. David Donaghue, commissioner of the Indiana Department of Correction, said the Miami prison passed an audit by the American Correctional Association with a 100 percent on the mandatory standards established by the ACA.

“That means we met the highest expected standards in the country for a prison,” said Walter Martin, superintendent of the Miami prison.

Martin said the accreditation is necessary in showing the prison offers proper treatment and services to the people who come into trouble with the law.

“Staff at the Miami Correctional Facility have made great strides in improving the operations and program standards at the facility,” he said.

“It really takes a committed team of professionals to focus on a range of issues including health, safety, staff training, quality of life for offenders, policies and practices, educational services and virtually all aspects of facility management.”

An award for being accredited will be presented to the prison in April at the summer ACA Conference.

The audit team spent three days at the facility going through policies, procedures and practices in reaccrediting the facility and spoke highly of the prison during the process.

“Staff members I spoke to were very knowledgeable and very professional about their jobs and those around them,” said James Allen, a member of the audit team and a correctional consultant from Michigan.

“The housing areas were exceptionally clean. I was amazed to see the floors as clean as they were.”

“There is a lot of positive care taking place here,” Tim Sharpe, an audit team member from Bluffton, S.C., wrote. “The staff were very respectful towards each other and in turn when talking to the inmates.”

The prison was last accredited in 2003 and is required to maintain high standards and undergo an audit every three years to be reaccredited.

The prison offers several educational and substance abuse programs for offenders including the “Clean Living Is Freedom Forever” program, which has been successful, according to prison spokeswoman, Ann Hubbard.

The program, a six- to nine-month intensive therapeutic program for offenders with significant impairment as a result of methamphetamine use — graduated 89 offenders last year.

The program has three phases — orientation and education, treatment and re-entry into the community. It includes individual and group counseling, relapse prevention, community meetings and life-skills training. Those chosen must have a desire to change their behavior, have a history of good conduct and no history of violence in the past 12 months. The facility also has been available to help the youth in the community as part of a “Straight Talk Program,” Hubbard said.

Using offenders from both the minimum security and the medium security, the program helps troubled youth by teaching them about the prison.

In 2005-06, Miami Correctional Facility met with more than 2,385 youth in the area. In 2006, the facility provided programs for more than 35 schools and 3,100 students and adults. Offenders donated more than 230 hours of the time for the program.

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Photos



WELL DONE: Miami Correctional Facility received a perfect score on an audit performed on the mandatory standards set by the American Correctional Association. KT photo by Tim Bath